



THE STORY OF MR. AND MRS. HAMPTON, CONNECTICUT

Mr. and Mrs. Hampton own a 100-acre farm, a house over 200 years old. When I called on her Mrs. Hampton reported the following facts:

Mrs. Hampton is 50 years old, and not too well this year. Mr. Hampton is 53 years old, and has hurt his back so that he can no longer do heavy work.

They have 11 children. Four are now married and three of them live away from home. A son and wife have two rooms in the home place, so there are eight children in the house at present and Mr. and Mrs. Hampton and the daughter-in-law.

All the girls can cook and make their own clothes. They also wash dishes, make beds, sweep, hang the washing, and do their own ironing. The mother is interested in outside affairs, the Red Cross, is chairman of the local Farm Bureau group, etc. She is out three or four times a week.

All the children play some musical instrument, some of them four or five different instruments. The mother plays the piano and has taught all the children to play the piano too.

The mother and girls exchange work when outside interests call them away for a day or evening. The boys do barn chores, mow lawns, drive the truck, plant, harvest, weed, build fires, keep fuel in house, help cut wood. No help is hired in or outside the house.

The mother gathers all vegetables for house use and for canning. Children brought them to the house for her the past year. She canned over 1,000 quarts a summer until 1942 when she canned around 1,300 quarts.

Mrs. Hampton's short cuts:

Sees that things are ready for breakfast at night - never gets breakfast - each gets own, and cleans up after self.

Has made kitchen very compact by making pantry the kitchen.

Has well-organized storage arrangements. Knows how to organize work, how to get excellent cooperation in the family.

Does house cleaning in the winter, since their kind of farming keeps all very busy spring, summer, and fall.

Has a faculty for planning ahead, doing as much as she can, having jobs lined up for others as they come in.

Explains in her letter her service of meals.

Story contributed by
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Hampton, Connecticut
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My dear Miss Stratton:

Have been thinking over your visit and just can't imagine what you are going to put into your story to make it interesting from what you could see and what you heard. I was so humiliated at having you come on such an errand and find us in such an awful jumble of unfinished work that I couldn't think of a single interesting thing to tell you. You are probably wondering, as I am, why I was ever chosen from so many for an outstanding homemaker!! It certainly wasn't because I am a neat housekeeper, and efficiency and neatness go hand in hand, but because of my wonderful family, I suppose. Not much credit is due me for that either, for my ignorance has been colossal at times. But, by the grace of God all 11 have come up healthy and strong, pretty honorable; not one carouses, and they are polite and kind to old people. There are 25 of us in all,* and this is home to them all. Also everyone of them love the Lord. We never cease to be thankful for that.

During the World War we lost a 300-acre full-equipped farm, stocked with accredited Jerseys and Holsteins. They told us to produce and we went the limit. Poor feed killed our cows, it rained all summer, and a hundred acres of potatoes rotted in the ground. We lost everything, even my household furniture. We hit Hampton just at the same time the depression did, and have been fighting to keep our home ever since 17 years ago. The three youngest children were born here.

I have done a great many other things besides raise my family and take care of my house. Perhaps that is why my housework sometimes goes neglected. Such things as "disturbing the dust" and keeping things from getting cluttered! I've always helped my husband a great deal with whatever business he happened to be in, from keeping books, waiting on tables, to setting out cauliflower and feeding chickens, and loved to do it.

Several times we have taken children to board for awhile, and once I even walked from 2 to 5 miles a day selling dress materials, underwear, etc. Not because I had to, but because I wanted to. I loved that, too, and it did me a world of good. I did that for 2 years.

All my girls can cook and make their own clothes. My oldest boy is a good carpenter and mechanic, but works for the railroad just now. The next one is driving an oil truck, but his whole heart is in the farm he some day hopes to have. He is raising two calves. The saddle horses are his. The third boy is a mechanic and works in Boston. The fourth boy takes care of the cow, and the fifth and youngest takes care of the chickens. It is our intention to get them some more chickens and at least one calf to raise in the spring.

I can see now that we should have had more social life. We had very little time or money for entertaining or going out. My children like sports better than dancing or parties, and are really good on either roller or ice skates, and at swimming or riding. They're regular ducks where there is water. The boys built a dam and we have a small private swimming hole. My oldest boy

*Mr. and Mrs. Hampton, 11 children, 8 grandchildren, and 4 in-laws.

has also received his student's license for airplane pilot, but that's all off now for the duration. I think you would have to visit us a week during each season of the year to get a really good cross section of what our family is like, and I wish you might do just that.

I do not believe in refusing to let my children do anything without there being a very good reason why they shouldn't. Even then, sometimes it is good policy to let them try it. I never refuse to go somewhere with them, or do something with them unless I have to. Here again housework often has to take a back seat. We always have housework. Don't let anybody ever tell you that keeping house is all there is to being a homemaker! Now, if I've given you any additional information you are welcome to use it or not, and thanks for coming. Come again!

Here are some more things I've thought of that we do to save time for more worth-while things!

We choose the simplest methods in our work. We eliminate all unnecessary furbelows for everyday use in cooking and serving, especially extra dishes, so long as we don't rob the meal of its "eye appeal." Instead of putting all the food on the table we serve directly on the plates from the stove. This serves a dual purpose for the food remains hot for a second helping. You'd be surprised to see how many dishes and how much confusion this saves. We never waste a thing if we can help it.

We seldom buy clothing that is not easy to wash. We do not iron sheets and towels, but fold immediately when they are taken from the line before wrinkles are formed. All clothes are more easily and quickly ironed if folded when taken from the line.

When nearly all the children were in school was probably our hardest time. The older children themselves devised a plan for each child who was earning a regular wage to give two-thirds toward the upkeep of the home. The other third was his, to spend as he pleased.

This plan was so successful that we used it until the two oldest girls were married and the two oldest boys out of school. Then it was no longer necessary, and those with steady employment living at home now pay board. When out of work, they work at home on the place at whatever needs to be done and pay no board. This plan has also been successful. When the children married we did all we could to help them establish a home. All the children have been taught that their first responsibility as citizens is to pay for their own board and clothes. Other things come after. Too many young people have too much money to spend and no responsibility.

I think our greatest "neatness" problem is what to do with coats and wet boots and mittens in the wintertime. There are two sets each. Figure it up! After years of perplexity I have at last thought of a place to build a closet for these, that will be handy. Now to get the material and find time to build it!

I would like to say a word about what the war is doing to the young people of the Nation, which makes it very much harder for parents. We older ones think it is hard, but it is infinitely harder for the younger generation.

There is little hope for any normal immediate future. The nerve strain, the tenseness of uncertainty, the general excitement, are bound to tell on them. One of the worst things is the day and night work, the irregular hours, in many cases 7 days - or nights - a week. We older ones might be able to return to normal, but these young ones may never know the meaning of "Early to bed, early to rise." So it is going to be increasingly hard for us mothers to keep up the morale and also the morals of our growing children.

I do hope you will be able to find a word or two or an idea in what I have written that will help make your report interesting or perhaps a little bit helpful to some other homemaker.

Very sincerely,

/s/ Mrs. Hampton

It is the wise parent who takes an active interest in the children's doings without ever "butting in." I believe in waiting for their confidence to be given voluntarily whenever possible.

Here are some of the things our children ask us to do with them.

Attend fairs, horse shows, picnics, dances, and movies.

Go on trips to airports, and business or pleasure trips, and camping, also shopping trips.

Dad's opinion is valued on new purchases, such as cars, livestock, etc. and on any work to be done or new undertaking.

Many times I taught those at home who didn't finish highschool. I conduct Bible studies every week, both at home and also in other homes. Several times I've taken care of my daughters when their babies were born.

Although this seems to be a very long letter, it can only serve to give you a general view of our family life and methods. I'm not quite sure just what you're supposed to aim at, you see, and am afraid your visit might not have been altogether satisfactory from the viewpoint of your work. I wish you might have met the whole family!

Mrs. H.